

News Release



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July 8, 2004

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FWS EXTENDS PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD FOR THE GREATER SAGE-GROUSE UNTIL JULY 30, 2004

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced it will publish a notice in the Federal Register tomorrow to extend the deadline for submitting information and comments regarding the status of the greater sage-grouse until Friday, July 30, 2004. Information and comments related to this status review previously provided need not be resubmitted.

The Service determined in a positive 90-day finding released April 16 that three petitions to list the species provided substantial biological information warranting a more in-depth examination of the status of greater sage-grouse, and this review is now underway. Greater sage-grouse are found in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, eastern California, Nevada, Utah, western Colorado, South Dakota and Wyoming. They are also found in the Canadian province of Alberta and Saskatchewan.

“A key part of this status review is gathering the best available scientific information related to the status of the greater sage-grouse and its habitat,” said Fish and Wildlife Service Director Steve Williams. “We are taking this step today in an effort to provide as much opportunity for public input as possible while at the same time allowing us to meet our statutory deadline for making a final decision on the petitions. We will continue to monitor the situation.”

Anyone wishing to submit information regarding the greater sage-grouse may do so by writing to the Field Supervisor, Wyoming Ecological Services Office, Suite 4000, Airport Parkway, Cheyenne, Wyoming, 82001 or by electronic mail to <fw6_sagegrouse@fws.gov>.

This status review will determine whether the greater sage-grouse warrants a subsequent Service proposal to list the species as threatened or endangered. To ensure this status review is comprehensive, the Service is soliciting information from State and Federal natural resource agencies and all interested parties regarding the greater sage-grouse and its sagebrush habitat.

For more information about the sage-grouse and this finding, please visit the Service’s web site at <<http://mountain-prairie.fws.gov/species/birds/sagegrouse/>>.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System, which encompasses 544 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resources offices and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign and Native American tribal governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Assistance program, which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.

*For more information about the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,
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